



Bad roads cost Michigan drivers average of \$648 a year in additional vehicle expenses, study says

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Drivers dodge potholes on Francis Street in Jackson on Thursday, Feb. 22, 2018. Many Jackson area roads have potholes appearing. (J. Scott Park | MLive.com)

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Driving on poorly maintained roads costs Michigan motorists an average of \$648 a year in the additional vehicle operating costs, according to a study released today.

Those costs include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear, said the study by TRIP, a national nonprofit that analyzes transportation issues.

Only about 32 percent of Michigan's major roads were in "good" condition, according to the study's analysis of 2017 data from the Federal Highway Administration. About 15 percent of the roads were labeled "fair"; 20 percent, "mediocre," and 22 percent were "poor."

About 11 percent of the state's bridges are structurally deficient, the report said.

The study also estimated poor roadway designs costs the state about \$3.9 billion a year, or \$539 per driver, based on research that shows roadway design contributes to a third of serious and fatal crashes. The costs include lost household and workplace productivity and insurance, among other expenses.

And all that doesn't include the \$5.6 billion price tag, or \$789 per motorist, in the form of lost time and wasted fuel caused by traffic congestion, the study said.

TRIP gets its funding from insurance companies; equipment manufacturers, distributors and suppliers; businesses involved in highway and transit engineering and construction, and labor unions, among other funding sources.

The TRIP report a week after Gov. Gretchen Whitmer proposed a controversial 45-cent per gallon hike in the state's gasoline tax for road repair and maintenance.

"Every driver in Michigan is already paying a hidden tax on our roads, and the cost just went up," Whitmer said. "If we don't raise the \$2.5 billion we need to actually fix our roads the right way, with the right materials, the cost will continue to go up year after year."

The TRIP report does not mention Whitmer's proposal. It does reference a 2015 transportation funding package signed into law by former Gov. Rick Snyder to generate more money for roads.

The 2015 package hiked fuel taxes and registration fees and also takes \$600 million a year from the state's general fund to increase road funding by \$1.2 billion a year by 2021.

It's a move in the right direction, the report said, but it's not enough.

"While this increased funding will allow the state and local governments to move forward with numerous projects," the report said, "the funding is not sufficient to fully address the significant deterioration of the system, or to allow the state to provide many of the transportation improvements needed to support economic growth."

The report also noted the 2015 package requires pulling revenues from the state's general fund, a plan that could change if the Legislature decides it can't afford that expenditure.

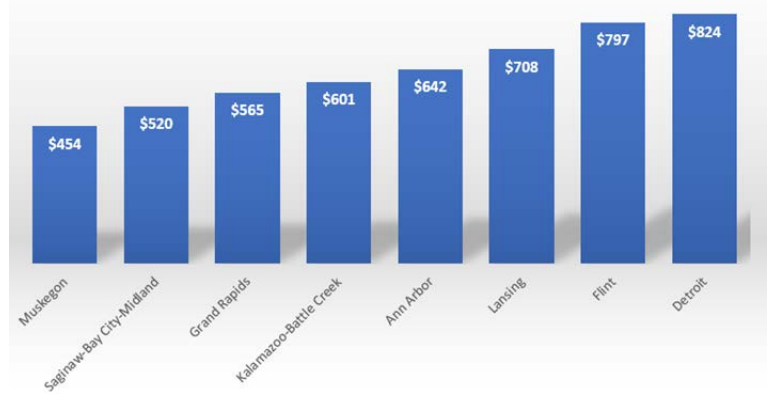
Michigan has about 7.1 million registered drivers and 11.1 million registered vehicles, according to the Michigan Secretary of State's office.

Other highlights of the TRIP report are below.

Metro Detroit has the highest estimated costs for vehicle wear and tear related to bad roads.

The report estimated the average cost per driver in seven metropolitan areas. Metro Detroit topped the list, at \$824 per driver, and metro Muskegon was at the bottom, at \$454 per driver. The chart below shows the TRIP estimates.

Avg. cost per driver for vehicle wear and tear caused by bad roads, by metro area



Estimated average annual cost per driver for additional vehicle operating costs related to rough roads. These costs include accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs, and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

The Kalamazoo-Battle Creek metro area has the biggest additional costs per driver related to poor road design.

TRIP estimates the economic costs of serious and fatal traffic crashes in Michigan related to bad roadway design is \$3.9 billion per year. These costs come in the form of lost household and workplace productivity, insurance and other financial costs.

The estimate for Kalamazoo-Battle Creek was \$831 per driver compared to \$447 per driver in metro Ann Arbor, the lowest of the seven metro areas.

Avg. cost per driver for safety issues related to poor road design, by metro area

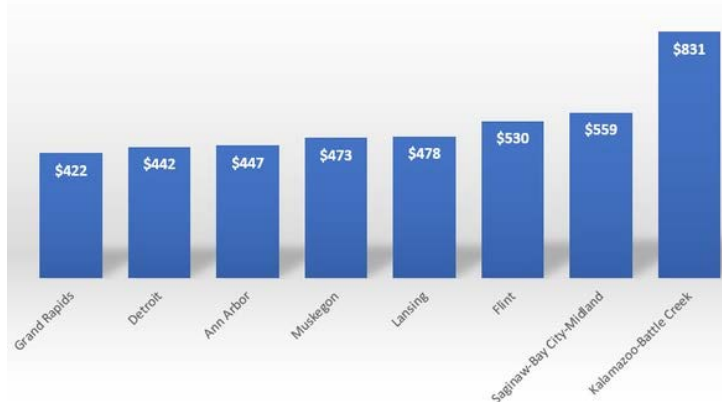


Chart shows estimated cost per driver for accidents related to poor road design. (Source: TRIP)

Metro Detroit drivers have the biggest estimated costs related to traffic congestion.

Traffic congestion costs Michigan motorists a total of \$5.6 billion each year in the form of lost time and wasted fuel. The problem is most serious in metro Detroit, where the estimated average cost per driver is \$1,278, the study said.

Avg. annual cost per driver for issues related to traffic congestion, by metro area



Costs per driver related to traffic congestion (Source: TRIP)

44 percent of major roads in metro Detroit and Flint are in poor condition.

Of the seven metro areas analyzed, Detroit and Flint have the highest percentage of roads deemed in poor condition, according to TRIP.

Below is a chart showing the breakdown for all seven metro areas and the statewide numbers.

Condition of major roads by metro area, 2017

Based on 2017 pavement condition data from the Federal Highway Administration.

Metro area	Poor	Mediocre	Fair	Good
Ann Arbor	30%	25%	17%	28%
Detroit	44%	26%	14%	16%
Flint	44%	21%	13%	22%
Grand Rapids	24%	26%	17%	33%
Kalamazoo-Battle Creek	26%	27%	19%	29%
Lansing	34%	26%	18%	22%
Muskegon	19%	19%	17%	46%
Saginaw-Bay City-Midland	22%	16%	30%	32%
Statewide	24%	20%	15%	41%

The Saginaw-Bay City-Midland region has the highest percentage of bridges in poor repair.

An estimated 20 percent of the bridges in the Saginaw-Bay City region are “structurally deficient,” according to the TRIP’s analysis of federal data. The data looked at bridges at least 20 feet long.

Below is a breakdown by metro region.

% bridges structurally deficient by metro area

Share of structurally deficient bridges in the state’s largest urban areas and statewide.

Metro area	% deficient	Number deficient bridges	Total # of bridges
Ann Arbor	17%	43	258
Detroit	9%	225	2,581
Flint	14%	53	371
Grand Rapids	4%	36	950
Kalamazoo-Battle Creek	10%	46	483
Lansing	13%	88	652
Muskegon	10%	14	141
Saginaw-Bay City-Midland	20%	129	603
Statewide	11%	1,175	11,180

The state is expected to spend \$3.1 billion on surface transportation in 2019.

That’s up from \$2.2 billion in 2015, thanks to a long-term funding package signed into law by Gov. Rick Snyder.

Of the \$3.1 billion this year, \$1.64 billion will go to counties and local municipalities for local roads; \$1.14 billion will be used to repair and upgrade state roads, and \$350 million is for mass transit.

However, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer says the state needs an additional \$2.5 billion a year to properly fix and upgrade Michigan roads.